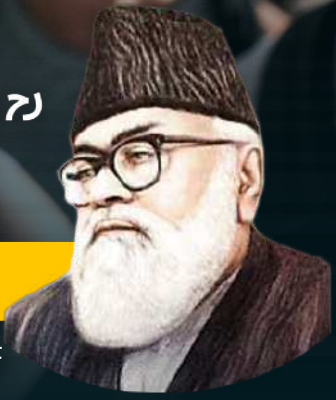
Islam and the concept of Social Justice

SYED MAUDUDI



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لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ

لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا

FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH ALONE! WE SEEK
FROM YOU NEITHER REWARD NOR THANKS

QURAN 76:9

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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FOREWORD

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is a translation of one of the papers of Maulana Maududi, titled '*Islam Aur Adl-e-Ijtimai*', that was read at the gathering of the *Motamir Aalam Islami*[1] in Makkah on the occasion of *Hajj* of 1962AD.

About the translation

The original translation of this paper from Urdu to English was done by Br. Hassaan Siddiqui. It was then reviewed and proofread by Br. Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf. The translation of certain passages was updated as a result of the review. While doing this translation, we have tried our best to ensure that the intended meaning of the author is represented as closely as possible. However, we seek forgiveness from Allah swt for when we, indeliberately, could not achieve this objective.

About the headings

Certain headings included in the Urdu print have been re-worded during

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[1] Motamar al-Alam al-Islami (مؤتمر العالم الإسلامي), also called 'The World Muslim Congress' was founded in 1949. It has general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

the translation. Several additional headings have been included as considered appropriate for enhancing the clarity of contents, facilitating a quick review of the paper, and enabling ease of revision.

About the topic

By the end of the first half of the 19th century, the West had already bade farewell to the religion and, in their opinion, set themselves free from any need for divine guidance. The main source of knowledge for them now was 'mechanical materialism'. This was the era of the triumph of the philosophies of Darwin, Marx, and Fried. This trio aimed to demolish, in the minds of people, the fact that the human being has been made the *Ashraf-ul-Makhlooqat* (the best of the creations) and that his existence has a purpose. In these times, Maulana Maududi not only challenged these western philosophers and proved the shallowness of their ideas; but also questioned those so-called Muslim thinkers who blindly followed whatever came from the west. Through the superior power of his reasoning, he explained the very many shortcomings of the prevalent philosophies of the time and proved the supremacy of Islam as a complete code of life. The current book is one of the testimonials to his services; in this, Maulana has elaborated the topic of 'Social Justice' and explained it beautifully by means of comparison.

About the organization of contents

The contents of this book have been divided into four chapters.

Chapter 1: In Chapter 1, Maulana Maududi has explained the various tactic of Satan through which it deceives humanity. In this regard, Maulana has

presented a few examples in terms of modern systems and philosophies. He has also objected to 'the intellectual inferiority' and 'the awe for whatever comes from the west' that some Muslims are suffering from. 'Social justice cannot be established except through the implementation of Islam' is the statement he elaborated on while ending this section.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 explains the two fundamental concepts related to social justice: 'Individual freedom' and 'the power of institutions and collective bodies'. He explains the need and limits of each of them and highlights the importance of balancing between the two in order to establish social justice.

Chapter 3: Building upon the two key concepts explained in chapter 2, this chapter explains how these two factors remain out of balance in capitalism, liberalism, and communism. Maulana Maududi has highlighted the reasons why these systems are far away from justice.

Chapter 4: After demolishing the man-made systems, Maulana Maududi presents Islam as a perfect system to establish social justice. This is covered in chapter 4. He explains its various tenants and essential features that ensure the balance between the two key conceptions described in chapter 2. He concludes the topic with a call to action to the readers: If Islam provides this just system, why are they then not working towards implementing it in the Muslim lands and formulating their constitutions in accordance with it? This is the question that you and I have to prepare to answer on the day when we will be standing in the court of Allah swt and explaining our actions and inactions.

May Allah swt reward Maulana Maududi for his outstanding services to the ummah; and may He (swt) make this publication a source of great Sadaqa Jariyyah for him as well as the translators and publisher.

iCAN Sama-O-Basr
Perth - 8th Jan 2023

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE DECEPTIONS OF SHAYTAN CONCERNING SOCIAL JUSTICE

Falsehood in the Guise of Truth

An important characteristic of human beings

Human beings have been created in the best of forms and this is evident in the fascinating fact that this being is seldom attracted to open mischief or provocation. That is the reason why Satan is often forced to somehow camouflage its evil invitations as guidance and righteousness. In Jannah, Satan could not have deceived Adam (عليه السلام) had he plainly said that 'he wanted him to disobey Allah so that he could be expelled from there'.

Satan's way around

To deceive Adam (عليه السلام), Satan said to him the following:

هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ شَجَرَةِ ٱلْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَىٰ

"Shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a kingdom that does not fade away?"

(Surah Taha, 120).

This very characteristic of human nature (i.e. not to give in to open mischief) is still prevalent to this day, and whatever faults and acts of foolishness Satan is making humanity fall into become popular only through deceptive

slogans and false coatings.

First Deception – Capitalism and Secular Democracy

In the present age, humanity is deceived the most in the name of 'Social Justice'. Satan, for a considerably long time, kept deceiving the world in the name of 'individual liberty' and 'liberalism', laying the foundations of a system of capitalism and secular (or God-less) democracy in the 18th century. This system was so overwhelming that, at one point in time, it was considered the epitome of human progress. Anyone who wished to be called 'progressive', could not achieve so except by supporting this system.

People used to think that if there is any system that was perfect for humanity in all aspects of life, it was this system of capitalism and Godless democracy that was established in the West. However, gradually, a time came when the world started to feel that this satanic system had filled the world with tyranny, suppression, and atrocity. Then, it didn't remain possible for Satan, the cursed, to further deceive humanity by using the slogan.

Second Deception – Social Justice and Communism

Not much time had passed when Satan crafted and introduced another deception with the name 'social justice and communism'. Under the garb of similar lies as before, he is working hard to establish another deceptive system[2]. This new system has already filled several countries in the world

[2] This paper was written in 1962 and at that time the implementation of various facets of communism was still in progress.

with such tyranny that the likes of it are not found in any other eras of human history. The recent deception is so powerful that several other countries are still convinced to accept it, thinking of it as something that offers an absolute opportunity for progress. This deception, in fact, is still unfolding.

The Peak of Intellectual Subservience of Educated Muslims

The treasure of Divine guidance

Muslims have with them the ultimate and eternal guidance in the form of the word of God and the *Sunnah* of the messenger of God ﷺ; these two sources of light are sufficient until eternity to alert and warn them about any satanic invitations and to guide them in all aspects of life.

The problem of being in awe because of intellectual inferiority

Despite having this treasure, some intellectually poor Muslims are oblivious of their own Deen and are in awe of the cultural and ideological foundations of colonists and oppressors. It is for this reason that whatever slogans they hear being raised from the camps of dominant nations, they promptly affirm that; they start raising the same slogans in their own camps too.

During the time of the French revolution[3] and the era in which the conceptions that it generated dominated, 'progressive' educated Muslims would consider it their very duty to embrace that perspective, attune themselves according to it, and talk about that in whatever gathering they

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[3] The French Revolution was a period of radical political and societal change in France between 1789 and 1799. Many of its ideas are considered fundamental principles of liberal democracy. The central ideals of the French Revolution were 'liberty', 'equality', 'freedom' and 'fraternity'. The results, however, were 'economic disparity', 'inequality', and 'lack of reforms and leadership'.

went to. Without it, they would feel as if people would consider them backward.

When this era passed, the direction and compass of these progressive Muslims changed with it too; their new slogan, now, was 'social justice and communism'.

They want Islam to bend with them as they keep turning and changing sides

One might say that what has been described above is still understandable to a degree. But what is completely unacceptable is when they wish Islam too to change its path and direction just like them and incorporate the 'necessary' changes they discover through their new false compass. They wish to stay with Islam but wish that Islam should also follow the path they see as 'the path to progress' and hence protect itself from being considered a 'backward religion'.

In this regard, they first attempted to prove that the western conceptions of individual freedom, liberalism, capitalism, and secular democracy were commensurate with Islam. Now, following a no different approach to what they adopted in the past, they are proclaiming that Islam also supports the conceptions of "social justice" which stem from communism.

This is where the intellectual subservience and ignorance of our so-called "educated lot" drops to its lowest ebb.

The objective of the current paper

How do the "ignorant in power" respond to counsel

In this paper, I wish to explain the correct meaning of Social Justice and how

a system of social justice can be established. While doing so, it is already noted that there is not much expectation, unfortunately, from those who are desperately trying to enforce communism as the only way to establish social justice to admit a shortcoming in it and revert to the truth. This is because of the fact that when the ignorant remains merely ignorant, there are many possibilities for him to correct himself; however when he becomes the ruler, the arrogant thought "I do not see any other God for you apart from me" (Surah Al-Qasas 28:38)[4] does not leave any room for him to be able to understand the counsel of those who wish for him to come out of ignorance.

How does the general respond to counsel

Thankfully, the general public, on the other hand, is always open to being made aware of the tricks of Satan. At the same time, it is they whom the wayward and deceitful come after to nourish their narrative. Therefore, my objective through this paper is to uncover the reality and expose the various forms of falsehood in front of these common people.

Social Justice can only be achieved through Islam

Who has the right to define 'justice' and 'injustice'?

The first thing that I want to explain to my brothers is that those who raise the slogan that "Islam *ALSO* offers social justice" are grossly inaccurate and

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[4] The full ayah is as follows:

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَأُ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرِى فَأَوْقِدْ لِى يَٰهَٰمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلطِّينِ فَٱجْعَل لِّى صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّىٓ أَطَّلِعُ إِلَىٰٓ إِلَٰهِ مُوسَىٰ وَإِنِّى لَأَظُنُّهُۥ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ

Pharaoh declared, "O chiefs! I know of no other god for you but myself. So bake bricks out of clay for me, O Haman, and build a high tower so I may look at the God of Moses, although I am sure he is a liar."

wrong. The truth and reality is that "Islam is the only *Deen* that ensures complete social justice". Islam is the *Deen al-Haq* sent down by the Creator and Guardian of the universe. It is the prerogative of that very Creator to define what justice is and what negates it. No one else has the authority or the capability to define it. Human beings are not their own Lord and Rulers that they could define the criterion of justice on their own. The status of human beings in this universe is that of a slave and an accountable being. It is not his job to define the criterion of justice for himself but that of his Lord and the real Ruler.

Limitations of human intellect and reasoning and the flaws of man-made systems

Irrespective of whatever high intellectual status a human being enjoys or even if many people of high intellectual status join hands together, they cannot escape the overpowering of their intellect by their desires and biases. Human intellect is limited. For this reason, there is no possibility for any human being to devise a system by himself that can provide true and complete justice. Irrespective of how much it might seem to be based on justice, the man-made systems do not take long before their practical manifestations prove how far they actually are from justice. That is the reason why man-made systems always prove to be futile after a period of time. There is absolutely no doubt that true Justice can only be established by Allah swt, The One Who knows the seen and the unseen, The Sacred One worthy of all praise!

Justice is the objective of Islam

Another aspect that should be well-understood is that the one who says that 'Islam has ALSO got justice in it' is saying something that significanrly falls short of complete truth. The reality is that Islam came to establish Justice and

that is the reason why it was sent down. Allah swt says:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلْقِسْطِۖ وَأَنزَلْنَا ٱلْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥ وَرُسُلَهُۥ بِٱلْغَيْبِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ

Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and with them, We sent down the Scripture and the balance ˹of justice˺ so that people may administer justice. And We sent down iron with its great might, benefits for humanity, and means for Allah to prove who ˹is willing to˺ stand up for Him and His messengers without seeing Him. Surely Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty. (Surah Hadid 57:25)

In his quest for achieving justice, a true Muslim will never make the mistake of opting for any other solution except what Allah and his Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) have bestowed him with. The moment he feels the need for justice, he will know that it cannot be achieved by following anyone else apart from Allah swt and His Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). A Muslim knows that in order to establish justice, all he is required to do is to establish Islam in its entirety. Adl or justice does not have any existence of its own outside of Islam; establishing Islam automatically means that justice has been established.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE REALLY MEAN?

Now we have to see what Social Justice really is and what is the correct method to establish it.

Individual Freedom

Grooming of human personality is an objective

> In this part, Maulana Maududi is explaining that it is not enough to set certain criteria of success for society at large while neglecting the needs of individuals. The development needs of individuals require due consideration if social justice is to be established. If the individuals are subjugated, then there is no social justice! Even if the so-called objectives set for society are being achieved!

Every society is made up of hundreds, thousands, and millions of people. Every member of this compound and collective body has a soul, intellect, and consciousness. These people require opportunities to develop and grow. Each of them has his or her own developmental needs. They all have personal interests and aspirations. Their bodies have certain needs which are required to be fulfilled.

Human beings aren't lifeless parts of some machine that lack their individual status. "A working machine" is not the only thing that is required to be achieved! It is not the case that the parts of that machine are "useless" in their

individual capacity. In fact, human society is composed of living people. These individuals have got an existence of their own outside of the 'whole' too.

In reality, 'the whole' exists to serve them! The very reason why humans come together to form societies is that they believe this would help them fulfill their needs and achieve what their souls and bodies require.

The accountability on the day of judgment will be of individuals

All these individuals are answerable in front of God in their individual capacities. Each one of them, after living for a specific time given to him in this world and after appearing on the test that he was made to appear in [i.e. this life and the choices he had to make], is answerable to Allah swt. They, as individuals, will be asked about what they did in their lives and what they brought forth on judgment day. They, as individuals, will be asked about how they utilized the powers, capabilities, and resources that were given to them. It will be an individual act. This questioning will be from each individual separately. They, as individuals, will need to provide an answer for what they brought forth with them.

The need for individual freedom is a natural consequence of the above

Both these aspects, 'fostering and development of a human character' and 'individual accountability' demand that there should be freedom at the individual level [otherwise there is no point of individual accountability]. If people in society do not have the opportunities to achieve the just things they aspire for and if they do not receive opportunities to develop, then the humanity in them may come to a standstill. Such confined and helpless individuals suffer from stagnancy.

The burden of those who make unjust systems and strive to implement them

On the Day of Judgment, the responsibility for such an occurrence [i.e.

individuals being deprived of their freedom] will be on those who formulated, nurtured, and implemented the systems that caused it. Such people, who made the unjust systems, won't only be held accountable for their individual accounts, but also for those flocks and flocks of people whose individual aspirations they killed through their suppressive system. No person who has faith in the Day of Judgement can imagine appearing in front of Allah with such a burden.

If one is truly God-fearing, he will allow maximum freedom to others as individuals so that it is they themselves who carry the burden of the character they develop and the actions they do; the one running the system will be free of blame in this case if he did his job in the right manner.

Powers of Public Institutions

The purpose of the system of state

What has been discussed above was what relates to individual freedom. The next thing we must take into consideration is how and why societies are formed. Society is formed by the interaction of families, cohorts, nations, and humanity at large. It begins with a man, a woman, and their offspring; this forms the family. Then, these families form cohorts and communities, which ultimately form a nation. This nation forms a state and its system to enable the achievement of its collective ambitions.

Role of institutions

Public institutions of various sorts are responsible to ensure that every individual is provided security and assistance. Institutions are formed to ensure that individuals acquire access to those opportunities for self-development through this system which they would otherwise have been

unable to.

Why are institutions given powers?

The above cannot be achieved unless every institution has power over individuals and a larger institution has power over the others in a hierarchy so that they can stop and curb all such individuals and institutions that subdue the rights of others. They are also required to ensure that individuals and institutions that they govern operate in a manner that is required for the success and progress of the broader society.

Balancing individual freedom and institutional powers

This now is the point where the concept of social justice becomes relevant.

- On the one hand, there is a requirement to have individual freedom; human welfare requires complete individual freedom in society for one's needs as per their capabilities and preferences.
- On the other hand, there is a need for the protection of the rights of others and to prevent their subjugation by individuals. Communities, tribes, and groups should have the necessary freedom to prosper without others abusing their rights.

These two do not always align with each other. This situation highlights the need for the state's power over everyone to rule out high-handedness.

Further on, this issue, at a larger scale, becomes an issue for the whole of humanity.

- On one hand, states need to have freedom and the right to determine the course they wish to follow.
- On the other hand, there is also a need for some higher law and higher

power to ensure that none of the states and countries go out of their limits and suppress others.

A comprehensive definition of Social Justice in Islam:

In the light of the above, one can say that social justice refers to:

- the balance between the individual freedom available to people, clans, tribes, brotherhoods, and nations; and the power of institutions over individuals and other institutions to prevent oppression and subjugation.
- It also involves ensuring the provision of those services from individuals as well as collective bodies which are required for the broader welfare of the people and societies.

This is what collective justice calls for: individuals, families, tribes, communities, and nations enjoying the right amount of freedom, and institutions with power over people and one another ensuring everyone's rights, while utilizing skills for welfare of communities and individuals.

CHAPTER 3

SHORTCOMINGS OF MAN-MADE SYSTEMS

Shortcomings of Capitalism and Communism

Anyone who understands the above clearly will not take long to realize that just like how those conceptions of individual liberty, open-mindedness, capitalistic endeavors, and liberal democracy that spread in the aftermath of the French revolution were against the basic tenants of social justice, in the same manner, the communism which is being adopted in the obedience to Karl Marx and Engels is very far from the true concept of social justice.

One extreme – untamed rights of individuals

The first of faults with the former was to grant more than necessary freedom to individuals, and allow them to transgress their jurisdiction over families, tribes, communities, societies, and nations. This essentially put the larger society on the losing side as far as utilizing the capabilities of individuals was concerned.

The other extreme – untamed rights of the state

The latter system makes states so powerful that they almost usurp the rights of individuals, families, tribes, and communities. It gives the authorities so much power that it sees the people as mere tools of a machine to get the work done. Whoever thinks or says that this system can ensure collective justice, simply tells a lie.

Communism - the worst form of social suppression

The reality of communism

Communism is such a worst form of suppression that did not even exist at the time of Nimrod, Pharaoh, or even Genghis Khan. No sane person can take this as a 'system of social justice' if one or a few persons sit together and author their own social philosophy; capture the government by force; utilize its abundant resources to forcefully implement their philosophy on millions of people living in that country; usurp their properties; take over the lands; nationalize the industries; convert the whole country into a huge jail where there is no freedom to criticize, to plead, to complain, to seek help, and to call for justice; leave no institutions, platforms, or press where people can voice their concerns and share their feelings; provide no courts where people can take their cases to; spread the system of surveillance, reporting, spying, and dobbing to such an extent that people start fearing each other thinking that the one they are interacting with might be a spy; and make people so much afraid that they wouldn't openly express their feelings even in their own houses. After all this, people are fooled through elections! Even in the 'so-called' elections, it is ensured that no one who disagrees with the philosophy they authored can stand as a contestant. The upholders of these systems ensure that no person who holds his own opinion or does not wish to sell his consciousness can stand up!

Is 'social justice' all about 'economic equality'?

Let us suppose that even if this system succeeds in equal distribution of wealth (though no communist system has been able to achieve it thus far), would 'economic equality' alone be called 'social justice'? And as yet, I am not even asking about whether there is economic equality between the rulers and the ruled! I have not even asked about whether a dictator in such

systems and a poor peasant live a similar lifestyle with a similar level of comfort or not! All I am asking at this moment is that if at all economic equality is achieved between all these people, can this be called 'social justice'? Is it a form of 'justice' that a dictator and his followers are free to force a forged philosophy on the entire nation by using police, military, and intelligence service, whereas no one from the nation is allowed to say even a word against it? Is it justice that the dictator and a handful of his supporters are free to use the country's resources and establish all sorts of organizations and institutions to propagate their philosophy, but their opponents are barred from organizing, addressing a crowd, or getting any attention from the press? Is it justice that all landowners and industrialists are ousted and only one landlord and industrialist remains - the government? Is it justice if the cabinet is comprised of only a few people who can force their decisions upon the masses, and they make it impossible for the power to move out of their hands and go to anyone else? If human life isn't limited to economics alone [as we see from the above], how can economic equality alone be regarded as justice? Such an 'equality', or better called 'tyranny', cannot be regarded as social justice even if economic equality is established while the oppression in all other aspects of life remains. Even if the dictators and their aides lower their standard of living to the way commoners live, this system with all its very many pitfalls cannot be termed as social justice. All it would become is the first-of-its-kind tyranny!

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM

Rights of God and rights of people

I will now briefly describe Islamic justice.

There's no room in Islam for an individual or a group to invent a philosophy of justice or a method to implement it by themselves and impose it on the people by force. This wasn't done even by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or the Prophet's companions, Abu Bakr or Umer (رضی اللہ عنہ) or others. There's no room for human dictatorship in Islam. Only Allah swt deserves to be obeyed unconditionally. The Prophet ﷺ also obeyed Allah swt alone; we obey him ﷺ as he taught and conveyed to us Allah's commandments [May Allah swt's countless blessings be upon him for his untiring and exemplary efforts for the propagation of Allah's message and bringing us out of darkness]. The Prophet ﷺ never, معاذاللہ, invented any philosophy or methodology in opposition to what Allah willed. During the time of the rightly guided caliphs, it was only the Shariah that no one had a right to speak against; Other than that, every person had the right to speak about any matter at any time.

Freedom for Individuals

Directions from the Law-giver regarding individual freedom:

In Islam, Allah has designated boundaries for the freedom of individuals. He has given His decision about what is permissible and what is not. He has defined the responsibilities that are required to be fulfilled. He has also decided about the rights of one over the other, as well as the matters concerning the transfer and rotation of wealth. The responsibilities of society towards individuals, the just limitations put in place in this regard, and the services required from individuals, households, communities, and the nation have also been defined and elaborated. These principles are part of the permanent constitution of the Qur'an and Sunnah, which no one can change or have the right to alter. As per the said constitution, an individual cannot surpass his limitations, while others cannot violate his allowed freedom.

Rights and responsibilities regarding earning and spending wealth

An individual cannot transgress the rules set for the sources of earning and the methods of spending. He is liable for punishment if he does so. At the same time, his rights are guaranteed concerning earning wealth from permissible sources. Such rights cannot be questioned. So is the case with permissible methods of spending.

Responsibility toward the state

Likewise, the responsibilities of individuals towards society's welfare have also been clearly laid out; they are not obliged to mandatorily work on anything exceeding that, except for what they would want to do voluntarily. The state is also bound to fulfill the rights of individuals and reciprocate their services to the country.

Comparison of the Islamic concept of individual freedom with the communist perception of this term

There doesn't remain a need for any other system once this permanent

system is put in place. It ensures justice for all! If we truly understand the percepts of the system that Islam gives us and internalize its wisdom, no matter how much one tries, they cannot deceive Muslims to borrow communism in the guise of Islam or 'Islamic socialism'. The aforesaid constitution of Islam doesn't allow an individual the freedom to harm the interests of the broader society; likewise, it does not give society the powers to usurp the freedom of individuals that is necessary for their growth and nurturing.

Means of the transfer of wealth

Islam provides only three ways for the transfer of wealth to an individual: inheritance, gifts, and earning.

Inheritance

The inheritance that is credible is the one that reaches the heirs from a rightful owner of the wealth as per the conditions set by *Shariah.* The other two forms of transfer of wealth are also valid only if they have been given under the same terms [i.e. in compliance with the shariah].

Gifts

While gifts given by people to each to foster mutual love are perfectly permissible, the case of gifts from the government resource has certain conditions if they are to be considered permissible. Maulana Maududi has explained those conditions in the following passage.

If it is a gift from government resources, it is only allowed if it has been given for a permissible service via a valid method. Also, such a gift can only be

given by a *Shura*-run regime under the *Shariah* code, while also allowing public accountability.

Earning

Permissible and impermissible meanings of earning: As far as earning is concerned, Islam only allows it through permissible means. Any earning that involves theft, forcible takeover, tampering, cheating, bribery, corruption, prostitution, exploiting, *riba,* gambling, manipulation, trade of prohibited items, or publishing of obscene material is impermissible. Any wealth that is earned through permissible means comes under one's rightful ownership, regardless of its quantity. Moreover, this wealth cannot be increased or decreased using wrongful means.

People's right to question and ask for accountability: If any wealth is obtained from other than the rightful means, the Muslims reserve the right to question: مِنْ اَیْنَ لَکَ ھٰذا (i.e., 'Where did you get it from?'). Regarding any such wealth, there should first be a legal investigation and if it gets proven through it that it was not acquired lawfully, then the government reserves the right to seize it.

Limits on spending the wealth

The rationale for putting limits on where one can spend

Individuals are not left completely uncontrolled to spend their wealth without any restriction, even if it is their lawfully earned wealth. Certain restrictions have been put in place on individuals to prevent them from spending their wealth on things that can harm society or themselves.

What is prohibited to spend upon

In Islam, no one can spend their wealth on acts that account for evil. It is for this reason that consuming liquor or using narcotics or engaging in adultery are forbidden. Islam doesn't allow enslaving anyone and trading them; it does not allow the wealthy to fill their houses with slaves in this manner.

The above is not only true for common households but also states. Maulana Maududi has, in a beautiful and subtle manner, explained the weaknesses of those ideologies and systems which treat individuals as slaves who are not given the right to exercise their own choice and enjoy the freedom to do what they want.

Limits on overspending

Islam also puts limits on overspending and beyond-reasonability lavishness. It disallows that one lives in ultimate luxuries while his neighbor goes to bed hungry.

What can one spend upon

One can only benefit from his wealth by **spending** on permissible and appropriate matters; and only the right and lawful means of **earning** are allowed for those who intend to make money from their excess wealth. The boundaries set in this regard cannot be transgressed.

Social Service through the distribution of wealth

Zakat

To ensure service to society, Islam makes it mandatory for those who have wealth beyond a certain threshold to pay *zakat* (the mandatory charity). The same rules apply to business earnings, agricultural produce, livestock, and

some other kinds of wealth. If *zakat* is collected under the method provided by *Shariah* and distributed as per the categories detailed by Qur'an, there won't be a single person in a country who would be deprived of life's necessities.

Inheritance

In addition to this, any wealth that gets accumulated with an individual gets distributed among his or her heirs after the former's demise to prevent the centralization of any wealth from becoming permanent [and to ensure the rotation of wealth].

Terms of work and service

When the state cannot involve:

In addition to this, Islam favors that the terms of work and services should be mutually agreed upon between the owners of land and those who work on it, between those who run the industries and those who work in them, and so on. It prefers that this happens without the need for the involvement of the state.

When the state can involve:

However, when these matters move into the realm of injustice [from any party], the government reserves the right to intervene and make things right with the help of the law.

Limited and controlled government ownership

Right of government to run an industry or business

Islam doesn't bar the operation of a trade or industry to be directly run by the government [under certain situations, for example:]

- If a trade or industry is essential for public interest but the individuals are not inclined towards running it, or
- If it is against the public benefit for it to be run under certain individuals

In such situations, the government has a right to pay something to those people [who were in charge of the relevant means] and take the reign of that business into its own hands; it can then decide on alternate means to run it. There is nothing that prohibits this.

What is prohibited in this regard

What Islam does not allow, however, is that all means of production of wealth become the property of the government and the government becomes the only entity owning the trade, manufacturing, and land.

Conditions for Treasury

In terms of Bayt-ul-Maal (treasury), the following are the key principles:

- **Who owns it**: Islam has a definitive and absolute decision in this regard: the Bayt-ul-Maal belongs to Allah swt and Muslims. No individual has the right to personal ownership of it.
- **Management of treasury**: Like all other matters concerning Muslims, the treasury is also to be managed by the nation through its sovereign representatives. Any money that's taken out from Bayt-ul-Maal or spent on any matter needs to be under what *Shariah* permits.

- **Right of accountability**: Muslims have all the right to scrutiny and accountability for any expenses.

The Question

Before I conclude this discussion, I ask every wise individual: if collective justice is all about economic justice, isn't the criterion set by Islam for the latter adequate [as it certainly provides the best system for economic justice]? In the presence of this, the most-perfect system in every aspect, is there any need at all for usurping freedom and wealth of the masses and hand-over the reins of the entire nation to a few [under the guise of 'social justice']? What is stopping us from setting up the governments in Muslim countries to run on Shariah and to form our constitutions based upon it? The day we do so, it will not only be us who wouldn't need to seek any 'blessings' from communism, but also the other states who have currently embraced this system will realize that the cure for the darkness they are experiencing is right in front of their eyes [in the form of Islam]!

Further reading:

1. Syed Qutub (1969). Al-Adalah Al-Ijtimaiyyah Fi Al-Islam [translated as: 'Social Justice in Islam'].
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3. Dr. Nazir Khan (2020). Divine Duty: Islam and Social Justice. Published by Yaqeen Institute. Retrievable from: https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/divine-duty-islam-and-social-justice

4. Dr. Hameed Abdul Qadir (2016). Islam ka tasawur e Adl [translated as: The concept of Justice in Islam]. Published in Monthly Tarjuman ul Quran (Feb 2016). Retrievable from: https://www.tarjumanulquran.org/articles/feb-2016-islam-ka-tasower-adal

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